

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 NSC-10 RSC-01 SCEM-02 USIA-15 SPC-03 PRS-01

PA-04 DRC-01 NSF-04 /109 W

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R 071841Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6247

USAEC WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 14430

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, UK

SUBJECT: PROSPECTIVE HMG DECISION ON NUCLEAR POWER
REACTOR TYPE

REF: A) LONDON 14049, B) LONDON A-1421, C) LONDON 14147
D) RUBIN-ERLEWINE TELECON.

1. REF A COMMENTS ON ADVERSE PUBLICITY IMPENDING U.K.
DECISION ON LIGHT WATER REACTORS, REF B TRANSMITS
TEXT OF SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLES ON LIGHT WATER REACTORS
(LWRS) SAFETY AND REF C OUTLINES CURRENT STATE OF
PLAY ON U.K. DECISION REGARDING NEXT GENERATION OF
OF REACTORS. THIS MESSAGE DISCUSSES PROS AND CONS
OF POSSIBLE U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTION TO BRING ABOUT
DECISION FAVORABLE TO U.S. LWR WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO REQUEST FROM CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH
DEPARTMENT FOR U.S. PARTICIPATION IN SYMPOSIUM ON
REACTOR TYPES.

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2. AS COMMENTS ON LWR SAFETY INCREASE IN BRITAIN,

SEVERAL GROUPS RANGING FROM BRITISH SCIENCE WRITERS TO THE CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT HAVE SUGGESTED TO US POSSIBLE UTILITY OF MAKING AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGEABLE U.S. EXPERT WHO COULD ANSWER DEFINITELY QUESTIONS REGARDING LWR, PARTICULARLY LWR SAFETY. THE CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT HAS NOW SCHEDULED A SYMPOSIUM FOR INTERESTED CONSERVATIVE MPS ON DECEMBER 19 AT WHICH RELATIVE MERITS OF AGR, CANDU AND, HOPEFULLY, LWR WILL BE DISCUSSED IN SEPARATE PRESENTATIONS. WE SEE CONSIDERABLE MERIT IN PROVIDING AMERICAN EXPERT FOR THIS SPECIFIC OCCASION.

3. WE ALSO BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO CONSIDER ARRANGING OTHER MEETINGS IN ORDER THAT INFORMED BRITISH OPINION AND MEDIA CAN FEEL THAT THEY HAVE HAD FULL ACCESS TO U.S. EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THIS FIELD. EMBASSY DOES SEE, HOWEVER, POTENTIAL PROBLEMS SHOULD U.S. TAKE INITIATIVE IN FOCUSING ATTENTION ON LWRS AT A TIME WHEN A DECISION IS STILL UNDER GOVERNMENT REVIEW. WE BELIEVE PREPONDERANCE OF EXPERT OPINION HAS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED HMG SELECT LWR. FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, WE DO NOT WISH TO COMPLICATE TASK OF BRITISH MINISTERS WHO MUST EXPLAIN AND DEFEND THEIR DECISION.

4. SIR JOHN HILL, U.K. AEA CHAIRMAN, VOLUNTEERED ON NOVEMBER 30 TO DISCUSS POLITICAL PROS AND CONS OF MORE ACTIVE U.S. APPROACH WITH PETER WALKER, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, WHO WILL HAVE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECOMMENDING AND DEFENDING SPECIFIC REACTOR CHOICE BEFORE HIS CABINET, COLLEAGUES, PARLIAMENT, PRESS AND PUBLIC. WE HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED HOWEVER FURTHER WORD FROM U.K. AEA ON THIS QUESTION.

5. IN ANY EVENT, WE DO SEE AN URGENT NEED FOR EMBASSY BEING KEPT FULLY AND CURRENTLY INFORMED OF STATE-OF-PLAY IN U.S. ON LWR SAFETY ISSUE, TOGETHER WITH APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE. AS DISCUSSION HEATS UP, WE CAN
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ANTICIPATE INCREASING MEDIA AND PUBLIC INQUIRY WHICH WE SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO MEET PROMPTLY AND IN SATISFACTORY DETAIL.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: SELECTION OF KNOWLEDGEABLE U.S. EXPERT TO PARTICIPATE IN CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT SYMPOSIUM IN LONDON ON DECEMBER 19. DEPARTMENT AND AEC MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WHETHER

EXPERT SHOULD BE AEC OFFICIAL OR RECOGNIZED INDEPENDENT
AUTHORITY SUCH AS CHAUNCY STARR, MANSON BENEDICT,
SHERMAN KNAPP, LEWIS RODIS OR WILLIAM GOULD.

7. RUBIN, SENIOR AEC REPRESENTATIVE, USEC BRUSSELS,
CONCURS IN SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE. ANNENBERG

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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